

THE CONTACTS OF CIVILIZATIONS

simultaneously increased. Responsibility in tax collection was vated by the steady increase in assessments, by responsibility for frauds and contraband in the new monopolies. The Notables* on whom this principally devolved, were more and more unwilling to serve. Theirs was the onerous responsibility without any compeasttlug prestige and with daily diminishing powers. Mediocre men alone were willing to assume the burden in the hope that they could wrest from the people more than the state demanded of them. In all this change it was the non-taxpayers in the village who suffered the most, because they had no recourse against the Notables* abuse of power. This had ever been the case, but with increased pressure from above the Notables put the screws more on those below them.

Since independence was the breath of life to the commiHie, interference by the central power precipitated its dissolution. This true in varying degrees throughout the different Annamite countries, but most completely so in Cochin-China. One of its evidences was the growth of pauperism and vagrancy. Though the and mission have gradually stepped in to replace communal charity, the substitution was, especially in the early stages, very Public security became endangered by the growth of crime. It evident to even the most rampant assiinationlsts that the disintegration of the commune involved the loss of a very useful and instrument of local government It had certain

but perhaps something could be salvaged from the wreck

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